

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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R 161700Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 556
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMCONSUL CASABLANCA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMCONSUL TANGIER
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 6746

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR OAU MO SA SS
SUBJECT: MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENTS ON SAHARA DIPLOMACY

REF RABAT 6547 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FONMIN LARAKI HAS JUST SEEN KING KHALED IN
SWITZERLAND. SAUDI GOOD OFFICES ON SAHARA PROBLEM THUS CONTINUING,
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BUT APPARENTLY MEASURED PACE. GOM AND MAURITANIA ARE ONLY TWO
COUNTRIES TO HAVE REPLIED AFFIRMATIVELY TO OAU SECY GENERAL'S
CONTACTS ON SPECIAL SUMMIT ON SAHARA, WHILE KNOWLEDGEABLE AFRICAN
OBSERVERS IN RABAT MAINTAIN SUMMIT HAS LITTLE PROSPECT OF EVER
BEING HELD. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING DISCUSSION DEC 15 WITH AMBASSADOR, FONMIN LARAKI COMMENTED ON SAUDI ARABIA'S SAHARA MEDIATION AND PROJECTED OAU SPECIAL SUMMIT ON SAHARA. LARAKI CONFIDED THAT HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM GENEVA, WHERE HE HAD DELIVERED A MESSAGE FROM KING HASSAN TO KING KHALED OF SAUDI ARABIA. (HE INDICATED KHALED WAS IN SWITZERLAND UNDERGOING MEDICAL CHECKUP BY US DOCTORS.) AVOIDING DIRECT COMMENT ON RUMORS HE HAD MET BOUTEFELIKI IN PARIS RECENTLY, LARAKI NOTED THAT THERE WAS MUCH TALK ABOUT A SAUDI "MEDIATION." IN A MEDIATION, THE ALGERIANS WOULD HAVE TO MAKE PROPOSALS. THEY WERE, HOWEVER, FACED WITH A NUMBER OF SERIOUS PROBLEMS, INCLUDING CURRENT DIFFICULTIES WITH NIGER AND MALI, AND LARAKI DOUBTED THEY WERE PREPARED TO ALTER THEIR SELF-DETERMINATION POSITION ON THE SAHARA, WHICH HAD SOLE OBJECTIVE OF DETACHING THE AREA FROM MOROCCO/MAURITANIA. THEREFORE IT WAS MORE ACCURATE TO SPEAK OF SAUDI "GOOD OFFICES". ISSUES WERE AREA TENSIONS AND ALLEVIATING PROBLEMS BETWEEN NEIGHBORING STATES. IF SAUDIS COULD COME UP WITH MEANS OF RELIEVING TENSIONS, GOM READY TO CONSIDER THEM, LARAKI STATED. ASKED ABOUT SAUDI FONMIN PRINCE SAUD'S CURRENT "HUNTING TRIP" TO ALGERIA (ALGIERS 2880 NOTAL), LARAKI REMARKED THAT SAUD HAD SEEN BOUMEDIENE AND HAD THEN GONE ON LONG-PLANNED HUNTING TRIP TO LAGHOUAT AREA. HE SAID THERE WAS NO PLAN FOR PRINCE SAUDI TO COME TO MOROCCO AT THIS TIME.

3. TURNING TO PROJECTED OAU SPECIAL SUMMIT ON SAHARA, LARAKI ASSERTED THAT MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO HAD BEEN THE ONLY COUNTRIES THUS FAR TO REPLY TO OAU SECRETARY GENERAL ETEKI'S CIRCULAR TO OAU CHIEFS OF STATE FOLLOWING PORT LOUIS SUMMIT LAST JULY. LARAKI HAD SENT TELEGRAM TO ETEKI ASKING DATE AND PLACE OF SPECIAL SUMMIT AND STATING THAT MOROCCO WOULD BE THERE. OULD DADDAH HAD SENT SIMILAR MESSAGE,
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ADDING THAT ANY TIME AFTER BEGINNING OF JANUARY SUITED GIRM.

4. LARAKI ELABORATED THAT ETEKI HAD FIRST ASKED NIGERIA AND MALI WHETHER THEY WOULD HOST THE SPECIAL SUMMIT, BUT HAD RECEIVED NEGATIVE RESPONSES. AS LAST RESORT, ETEKI HAD APPROACHED EGYPTIANS IN HOPE THEY WOULD AGREE TO TACK ON SPECIAL OAU SUMMIT TO AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 10, INASMUCH AS PARTICIPANTS WOULD ALREADY BE IN PLACE. EGYPTIANS HAD MADE IT CLEAR THERE WOULD BE ONLY ONE MEETING -- THE AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT.

5. LARAKI SAID HE HAD NOT RAISED QUESTION OF POLISARIO OR SDAR PARTICIPATION IN OAU SPECIAL SUMMIT IN HIS MESSAGE TO ETEKI, NOTING WITH A SMILE THAT THIS WAS ACADEMIC IN VIEW OF ALMOST TOTAL LACK OF RESPONSES FROM OAU MEMBERS TO ETEKI'S CIRCULAR. IN HIGHLY UNLIKELY EVENT SPECIAL SUMMIT TOOK PLACE, THE GOM COULD OBVIOUSLY NOT SIT DOWN WITH "REPRESENTATIVES OF MERCENARIES."

6. MEANWHILE, SPECULATION CONTINUES HERE THAT LARAKI AND BOUTEFELIKI

MET IN PARIS RECENTLY AND THAT HASSAN-BOUMEDIENE SUMMIT IN RIYADY IS IN THE WIND. THESE THEMES PLAYED UP, FOR EXAMPLE, IN DEC 16 REPORT IN ISTIQLAL'S L'OPINION BY CHIEF EDITOR KAITOUNI, WHO ATTENDING CONGRESS OF ARAB JOURNALISTS IN ALGIERS ALONG WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM OTHER MOROCCAN OPPOSITION PAPERS. KAITOUNI ALSO ASSESSED BILATERAL POLITICAL CLIMATE AS BECOMING MORE RELAXED.

7. COMMENT: GOM CONTINUES TO PLAY SAUDI GOOD OFFICES" CLOSE TO CHEST. WHETHEVER IS GOING ON DOES NOT SEEM TO PROMISE IMMEDIATE RESULTS, AND MOROCCANS CONTINUE TO LOOK TO AGERIANS TO MAKE THE CONCESSIONS REQUIRED TO PERMIT CONCRETE PROGRESS.

8. RE OAU SPECIAL SUMMIT, MOROCCANS AND MAURITANIANS ARE APPARENTLY ESTABLISHING A RECORD ON WHICH THEY WILL BE ABLE TO FALL BACK SHOULD THE SUMMIT FAIL TO MATERIALIZE. MEANSHILE, KNOWLEDGEABLE AFRICAN AMBASSADORS IN RABAT, INCLUDING SENEGALESE AND IVORIAN, CONTINUE TO FEEL THAT SUMMIT HAS LITTLE PROSPECT OF EVER BEING HELD, POINTING OUT THAT MANY DELAYS AND CONFIDENTIAL

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OBSTACLES ARE LIKELY TO ARISE IN COMPLICATED PROCESS OF SETTING UP SUCH A MEETING.
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